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UNCLAS PRETORIA 004606

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DVC REQUEST: UNDERSECRETARY JOSETTE SHINER ON WTO

1. Program description: Pretoria requests a one-hour DVC with Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Josette Shiner to interact with South African media and academics on U.S. commitment to a successful WTO Ministerial Conference. This engagement would be designed to counter persistent inaccuracies about the US position on agricultural subsidies, inaccuracies that threaten to take root in South Africa. Chief among the inaccurate claims being repeated by South African Government officials is that the U.S. WTO agriculture proposal, instead of ensuring subsidy cuts, actually permits the United States to expand its domestic subsidies through box switching.

2. This request is in response to SecState 207068 from the Undersecretary, which asks that Posts rapidly rebut any attempts to mischaracterize the USG position in WTO negotiations.

3. An earlier plan to have a second DVC with SAG trade officials has been put on hold pending their confirmation of availability to participate.

4. Format: We propose a one-hour DVC with prominent business journalists and think-tank academics. U.S. Consulate Johannesburg (PAS) would host the dialogue.

5. Time Frame: The DVC should be at the earliest date possible to have maximum impact before the Hong Kong ministerial, which starts December 12. Per email exchanges with the Department, it appears that Tuesday, November 22, would be the only possible opportunity next week; otherwise, Post recommends any day during the week of November 28. Suggested start time is 9 a.m. (Washington).

6. Among the journalists and academics we would invite are: Jonathan Katzenellenbogen, Senior international affairs reporter, Business Day; Siseko Njobeni, trade and investment reporter, Business Day; Jabulani Sikhankhane, deputy editor, Business Report; Peter Fabricius, foreign editor, The Star; Paul Richardson, specialist writer (trade), Sunday Times; Andre Scheepers, specialist journalist, economics desk, South African Broadcasting Corp.; Peter Draper, research fellow - development through trade, The South African Institute of International Affairs.

7. Mission Program Officer: Assistant Information Officer Dan Biers; work tel (27) (12) 431-4217, home tel (27) (12) 346-8922, cell (27) (84) 950-0680; work fax (27) (12) 342-2090; biersdl@state.gov. DVC Program telephone number is 27-11-838-0249 for Johannesburg.

TEITELBAUM